

April 2005

Temperature: The middle month of meteorological spring was highlighted by temperature departures of +1.2°F at DCA, +2.0°F at BWI, and +2.2°F at IAD resulted in the third warmer than normal month in 2005 at the three major airports. While April brought no lengthy periods of abnormally hot or cold readings, there were significant variations in daily temperatures. Summer heat slipped in on three days (6th, 19th & 20th) when highs soared well into the 80's, peaking at 86°F at all three major airports on the 20th (and on 19th at BWI and 6th at IAD). In addition to those summer-like days, DCA recorded comfortable readings of 70°F or higher on 10 days, BWI and IAD topped the 70 degrees on 12. On several other days, temperature soared when strong sunshine quickly warmed dry, chilly morning air. On the 17th, the temperature rose 43 degrees from 31°F to 74°F at IAD. As the growing season quickly blossomed, allergy sufferer dealt with high levels of pollen.

April also featured cooler than normal readings on 5 days at DCA and BWI and on 6 days at IAD with highs only in the 50's, including a maximum reading of only 48°F at IAD on the 24th, and 49°F at BWI on the 3rd and 24th. Although there were no days with at or below freezing temperatures at DCA, some suburbs recorded frosty conditions on the 5th, 16th and 17th; IAD observed lows of 31°F on 16th and 17th; BWI registered a 32°F low on the 17th.

Precipitation: As in 2004, April brought above normal rainfall with amounts generally between 4"-5" at most locations including the three major airports. The month opened and closed with two significant storms, both on a Saturday, (2nd) and (30th). The first event began as steady rain the evening of the 1st, yielding more than 0.25" at most locations. On the morning of the 2nd, heavy thunderstorms deluged many areas, dumping more than an inch of rain. After a brief afternoon break, evening and overnight showers and thunderstorms dropped another half inch of rain at most locations. Rainfall totals of more than 2" were common for the 2 days throughout most of the area, including the three major airports; IAD measured 2.40". The three major airports all recorded daily rainfall records on the 2nd with amounts of 1.79", 1.63" and 2.07" at DCA, BWI and IAD, respectively. A few severe thunderstorms occurred the evening of the 2nd when Herndon and Orange Counties, VA, were pounded with 3/4" hail. Strong winds accompanied storms in some areas during the morning. Winds downed large tree limbs in Washington, D.C., and some trees and power lines in Howard County, MD. Minor flooding was reported in Georgetown and in Alexandria, VA. After the storm system passed, wind gusts of up to 50 mph were reported in some areas on the 3rd, knocking out power to as many as 10,000 customers in Northern Virginia, according to press reports.

On the 30th, soaking rains drenched the area with another inch of water at many locations. BWI recorded 1.25" of rain, DCA, 1.16". The month's other severe weather event occurred on the 23rd as late afternoon thunderstorms again dropped 3/4" hail, this time in portions of Stafford and Prince William Counties, VA, and in Poolesville, MD. In addition, wind damage was reported in parts of Anne Arundel and Calvert Counties, MD.

APRIL 2005 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to Date
National (DCA)	67.2	47.4	57.3	56.1	+1.2	86/20	40/17 ¹	4.33	2.77	+1.56	13.73
Baltimore (BWI)	66.7	43.7	55.2	53.2	+2.0	86/19 ²	32/17	3.81	3.00	+0.81	14.35
Dulles (IAD)	67.7	42.8	55.2	53.1	+2.1	86/6 ³	31/16 ⁴	4.34	3.22	+1.12	12.82

Other Occurrences: ¹25, ²19, ³20, ⁴17

Looking Ahead to May: Do warm temperatures in April predict a hot summer to come? The earliest first 90°F+ reading in Washington was March 22, 1907 (90°F); the latest first 90°F+ reading in Washington was July 12, 1979 (93°F). Below is a list of the last 10 years and the date of the first 90°F or greater reading at DCA.

Year	First 90°+ Reading of Year at DCA	Year	First 90°+ Reading of Year at DCA
2004	April 19 (91°F)	1999	May 7 (92°F)
2003	June 26 (93°F)	1998	May 19 (90°F)
2002	April 16 (92°F)	1997	May 19 (96°F)
2001	June 13 (93°)	1996	May 19 (95°F)
2000	May 30 (90°F)	1995	April 19 (91°F)